

MAY 10 1917

MISSISSIPPI-- --CENTENNIAL EXPOSITION 1917



THE
TIME--
--PIECE
OF
SOUTHERN
PROGRESS

OPENS
DEC. 10 1917

GULFPORT

MISSISSIPPI

Mississippi—a sentry at the turnstile of progress—invites the world to a birthday fete.

The invitation is the story of a land that has found itself. The day dreams of Mississippi—region of romance, flowers, sunshine, temperate climate, health and boundless opportunities for material success—are coming true.

There is a message here for you—tourist, homeseeker, investor, educator, fortune hunter, or man with the spirit of wanderlust. The American frontier of today is Mississippi. There the virgin opportunity is yet to be found, although d'Iberville trod the Gulf Coast of this State and founded its first colony more than two hundred years ago.

The new winter play ground of America; the rich lands of a State but one-third developed; the orange and pecan groves, vineyards, gardens, farms, large and small; the untouched resources of twenty million acres of productive soil, and a hospitable people, are calling to you.

It is because of all this that the Mississippi Centennial Exposition, celebrating the one-hundredth anniversary of State sovereignty, is to be held in Gulfport, December 10, 1917 to June 10, 1918.

Big things are under way in Mississippi. No state can more proudly stage an Exposition of its progress and its opportunities. There remains only the duty of conveying to you the story of why Mississippi invites the world to celebrate with her.

Primarily the Mississippi Centennial Exposition will reflect the advances made by the State since its admission into the Union. Mississippians are proud of their record. When one considers the comparatively small population of the State, the retarded growth incident to Reconstruction days and the lack, until a few years ago, of proper transportation facilities, there is no apology due for the fact that two-thirds of Mississippi's area still must be cultivated.

Rather is this an invitation to the outsider to come and cast his lot in a region of frontier opportunity.

For many years Mississippi, with great powers and resources lying latent within her, has watched the sweep of travel Westward. The tread of the homeseeker was heard on the plains to the north of the Magnolia State. The man seeking a change of scene and a new field of success has failed to look Southward because he did not know.

While Mississippi failed to awake, the soils of the

Middle West, even of the Pacific Coast, have been stirred by the newcomer and the pioneer. Arid lands felt the touch of transported water and responded because of that artificial stimulation. The widely advertised sections of California and Florida called their thousands and the high-priced farms in the country's interior shifted the center of population.

And all this time Mississippi held within her bosom a secret of incalculable value. She neglected to let the world know that her lands required no irrigation, that three and four crops a year may be grown on Mississippi soil, that a mild climate has made of her a winter garden, and 20,000,000 acres await the hoe.

In the realms of literature, art, science, statesmanship, politics, and industry, Mississippi has made history. It is only in self-advertising that she has failed.

The Mississippi Centennial Exposition, therefore has a two-fold mission. It will not only record the progress made during one hundred years of Statehood, but it must convincingly portray the boundless opportunities offered by Mississippi today and teach the State that the light hereafter is not to be hidden under a bushel.

At the Exposition one will learn that it is set in a four-crop country—that Mississippi is not dependent upon cotton plantations which produce or fail according to the activities of the boll weevil.

Here it will be shown that Mississippi has neither a rainy nor a dry season; that sixty inches of rain fall annually and it is beneficently distributed throughout the seasons.

Here will be revealed a climate without extremes of heat or cold; a climate that makes possible the growing of fruits, vegetables and flowers in the dead of winter.

Here will be exhibited the products of truck gardens, orange and pecan groves, corn, cane and cotton plantations, dairies and stock farms—all the yield of once barren lands or regions where forests stood.

And here in the final analysis, will be shown a wonder spot where one may find either pleasure or profit and spend the remainder of his days in contentment.

It must not be inferred that the laggard, the ambitionless man, the derelict, will find Utopian happiness and ease in this "frontier" section. Opportunity is not here for the individual who is unwilling to put his shoulder to the wheel of the State's development, and who is too indifferent to help himself.

But it is here for the homeseeker with a little capital and a purpose; it is here for the investor on large scale, and it is here for the man of great wealth who seeks a

playground and an ideal spot to spend his leisure time.

The Mississippi Centennial Exposition will be staged within a few rods of the shores of the Gulf of Mexico. To the east and west stretches a picturesque Gulf Coast, where magnificent homes extend for miles along the shell roads that skirt the shore line.

To the south lies a wide expanse of salt water, dotted here and there by quaint fishing smacks, old-fashioned schooners, great sailing vessels, motor boats and pleasure yachts. To the north are millions of acres of developed and undeveloped lands—an agricultural region second to none in the United States. There are still to be found, too, vast tracts of virgin timber and saw mills that have made Gulfport for many years a leading export point for the shipment of lumber.

Between the Exposition grounds and Biloxi is "Beauvoir," once the home of Jefferson Davis, president of the Confederacy. Davis came here after the war and it was here that he wrote "The Rise and Fall of the Confederacy." "Beauvoir," now maintained by the State of Mississippi and the Mississippi Sons of Confederate Veterans, is the last earthly residence of several hundred veterans and widows of veterans.

"Beauvoir" is one of the show places of the Gulf Coast country—a section which abounds in spots of unusual scenic beauty and historic interest. This soldiers' home is situated midway between Gulfport, a thriving town less than twenty years old, and Biloxi, a town more than two hundred years old.

Pass Christian, another winter resort, is but a few miles from the Exposition site. President Woodrow Wilson spent a Christmas at "The Pass," and plans are under way to invite him to return while the Exposition is in progress. "Wilson Day" at the Centennial will be a banner event, for this is an Exposition held in the "Solid South" and participated in by an entire nation.

The Mississippi Centennial Exposition is not to be merely a local affair. It is not a "State Fair." Sister States and Foreign Governments will have their exhibits at Gulfport. The United States Government has formally recognized the Centennial and authorized the President to invite participation by foreign nations.

Because of the Great War the most of Europe cannot join in the Centennial celebration but the nations of the Latin-American, in furtherance of the movement for trade promotion and more friendly relations among the American countries, are in position to accept such an invitation.

The exhibit of the Federal Government represents a value of approximately \$800,000. The sum of \$75,000 was appropriated to bring the exhibit to Gulfport from the San

Diego Exposition, and a number of additions have been made.

The Exposition grounds cover 147 acres. The majority of the buildings will be permanent in structure and in them will be found a comprehensive story of the industries, developments and opportunities of the Magnolia State and of other sections. The number and size of these buildings—the Mississippi, Coliseum, Woman's and Education, Manufacturers, Arts and Crafts, Efficiency, Administration, Lumbermen's, Negro and Federal—give an idea of the scope of the Centennial celebration.

Mississippi's eighty counties are squarely behind the State's birthday party. The Centennial will be the first exposition of national scope held in the far South within thirty years and Mississippi and the entire South are vitally interested.

The little city of Gulfport donated \$125,000 to the Exposition fund and the county of Harrison, in which Gulfport lies, a like sum. That is just an index of Mississippi's awakening.

Mississippi has seized upon the historical occasion of its one-hundredth anniversary of Statehood to hold an Exposition, "but the frank motive is to exploit the wonderful agricultural, horticultural, industrial and commercial resources of Mississippi and adjoining states."

In this connection an Exposition official shows that during the past decade the South has increased the assessed value of its property 81.25 per cent, increased its total wealth 129.23 per cent, increased its banking capital 68.92 per cent, increased its mileage of improved roads 147.28 per cent—with proportionate increase in other fields of endeavor—and yet the population has grown but 14.13 per cent.

"The fact that the South has increased less than fifteen per cent in population, and that Mississippi alone has 20,000,000 acres of uncultivated land (most of which can be bought at \$5 to \$25 per acre) points to the solution of our troubles. The need of Mississippi and the South is more homeseekers."

The importance of the mission of the Mississippi Centennial Exposition is apparent when one considers just a few facts about the State. For instance:

Prior to the outbreak of the European War the shipments of lumber alone from Gulfport has been more than three billion feet annually for several years.

The value of naval stores products from three Mississippi counties was placed at \$1,250,000,000 per year.

Biloxi is the largest shrimp packing point in the world. Practically every fish from the minnow to the tarpon is caught off the Gulf Coast. The "shrimp fleet," hundreds

of white-winged schooners sailing the Mississippi Sound for oysters, shrimp, crabs and fish, is one of the novel sights of the Gulf Coast—a Coast that furnishes annually seafood products worth approximately \$1,300,000.

Seven out of the ten successful varieties of the paper shell pecan originated on Mississippi Soil. Within a few years thousands of acres of land have been planted in pecans, and the industry, yet in its infancy, promises an increasingly rich yield in nuts and money.

The satsuma orange, practically immune to cold and possessing a delicious flavor, is becoming a favorite Mississippi product. So great is the market that the supply is about exhausted before the Christmas holidays each year.

Citrus fruits are easily grown in Mississippi. Bearing trees on the Exposition grounds will be a free sideshow at the centenary jubilee.

Commercial trucking, the raising of cattle, sheep and hogs, diversified farming that has rid Mississippi of the "one crop slavery" of a half century ago, and an industrial development that is fairly representative of the hundred years of Statehood, are a few other things of which the Exposition will be a mirror.

And if this has been accomplished by a State but thinly populated—as population goes today—who can deny that here is the land of opportunity and the refuge for those who have tired of the beaten track.

From an historical standpoint the Mississippi Centennial will weave a narrative that will entertain and instruct. Some of the Old World's most intrepid explorers have pressed the soil of Mississippi. More than two centuries ago DeSoto, Joliet, Marquette, Iberville, Bienville and La-Salle were charmed by the scenes and climate of a region that is the Mississippi of today. Their vision of civilization and plenty has become reality.

What a thrill must come as one follows at the Exposition the story of Mississippi from the days of Indians, with their legends and their romances, their battles and their surrenders, to these times of peaceful pursuits and a State's start upon a second century of prosperity and growth.

Here are a few historical facts about the Magnolia State:

The Constitutional Convention voted 23 to 17 to name the new State Mississippi instead of Washington.

Mississippi chartered the first college for women in the United States.

This State was the first in the Union to urge the

abolishment of imprisonment for debt, and the first to apply the principle of popular government to the Judiciary.

Mississippi was also the first State to remove the common law disabilities of married women, and the first to establish an institution for the higher education of young women.

The fascinating and evasive character, Philip Nolan, lived here before his spectacular career began; Aaron Burr was captured on Mississippi soil; Audubon, the great naturalist, once lived here; William Dunbar, the scientist, was a Mississippian; Jefferson Davis lived in Mississippi as a youth and again as an old man; Mississippi gave to the Nation Sargent Prentiss, an oratorical giant; in 1799 Lorenzo Dow sold his watch and purchased the ground for a church, the first protestant house of worship in the great Mississippi Territory.

These are but mile post events stretching along the way to the Mississippi of today. The region is as rich in romance and history as it is in natural resources. The composite story is one that will make the Mississippi Centennial of absorbing interest.

The State faces the future with the utmost confidence. The pendulum of progress has swung toward Mississippi.

There is a place here for you—whether tourist, home-seeker or adventurer. The world's highways are traversed by many men and women who have but to turn their eyes Southward and satisfy the inborn craving for a home and happiness.

Here one may find health, pleasure, plenty, industrial and agricultural opportunity, a climate that leads to contentment and the land that allures. What more can one ask—a playground and yet a frontier for commercial development.

Make your plans now to come to the Exposition on Mississippi's Gulf Coast. A welcome awaits you as real as the sunshine and flowers.

Come South! Spend your next winter here. Opportunity, of which Ingalls wrote, knocks.

The place you call home hereafter is up to you!

MISSISSIPPI CENTENNIAL EXPOSITION

H. E. Blakeslee,
Director General.

John T. Connell,
Executive Secretary.

GULFPORT, MISSISSIPPI

Opens December 10, 1917.

Closes June 10, 1918.

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